THESE CHILDREN ARE CRIPPLES

All Sixty-nine of Them, but They're Happy—Moreover, They Are, Some of Them, Able to Earn Their Own Living, and the Rest Are Learning to Do So—Work of One New York School

TWO HAPPY CRIPPLES.

STORY-TELLING HOUR.

THEY'RE GLAD TO GO TO THE COUNTRY.

The outgoing summer crowds that thronged the Grand Central Station laden with golf sticks, tennis racquets, fishing tackle and showing joyous anticipations of a summer vacation at the sea shore or in the country suddenly fell silent one day last week, and some eyes filled, as through the big double doors on Forty-second street there entered a crowd of children.

They, too, were bound on a vacation. They were off for a summer in the country, to which they had looked forward for nine long months. But in all that crowd of little boys and girls—sixty-nine of them—there was not one sound pair of legs with which to run races or jump ditches or climb trees, and there were many little backs that were only strong enough to lie quietly on the sweet green grass or rest in hammocks under shady trees.

There were those in the party who had but one leg, and those who had no legs at all. There were deformed limbs, crooked backs and little heads supported in cruel looking braces. But there were bright smiles on the pale little faces, and laughter and childish happiness in the hollow eyes.

They were the pupils of the William H. Davis Free School for Crippled Children, and they were off for their three months vacation at their summer home at Claverack. They were accompanied by their president and the founder of the institution, Mrs. Arthur Elliot Fish, and by their superintendent and teachers, and some of the weakest and most helpless of the little cripples were carried in the arms of attendants.

With low explanation of pity the crowd in the station parted and drew back to let the party pass through, and the eyes of many a woman filled with tears as with an unspoken prayer of thanksgiving she drew her own straight limbed little ones to her.

But they—were they sad?

Bless your heart, no! They were just as gay and just as excited and just as filled to overflowing with happy plans and joyous anticipation for their summer outing as were little Reginald and Kathleen with their straight backs and perfect limbs and white capped nurses to wait on them.

In each and every little heart that beat under an iron brace or a plaster jacket there was some particular plan or anticipation for the summer, from little humpbacked Andrew, the pet and baby of the school, who is hoping to catch a live "wabbit," to tall Willie, who is planning a garden all his own.

They laughed and chattered to one another as they limped and hopped and dragged themselves toward the train, but when they were once seated in the coaches, and were being whirled out of the city, which has been to many of them a prison house of pain, and away to the peace and happiness of the country, they forgot their pain and fairly whooped with glee.

Six years ago a mother mourning the loss of her own loved boy turned her empty arms and hungry heart toward the cries of other children. With the sorrow of her own loss fresh upon her, Mrs. Lillian Gilbert Fish opened her home to the crippled children of the poor of New York, and in memory of her son, Gilbert Austin Fish, founded the free school for crippled children.

For three years the school was carried on at her home, but as the work grew, and more and more helpless little derelicts floated into this peaceful harbor, the home grew too small to accommodate them, and in 1903 the spacious house now occupied by the school at 471 West Fifty-seventh street was given for the work by Mrs. William S. Hawk, in memory of her father, William H. Davis. This gift made it possible to accommodate more children, and the roll now numbers seventy pupils, with an average attendance of sixty-five daily.

As the condition of many of the little pupils was such as to cut them off from attending public school, and as many of them were unable to walk, one of the first things to be done was to obtain a roomy, comfortable bus, hung on specially constructed springs, to carry the little sufferers to and fro between their homes and the school. This bus makes its rounds at 9 o'clock in the morning every week day of the year, excepting the months between June and September, when the children are in the country, and in the care of one of the teachers carries the pupils to and from the school.

The school is graded to correspond to the grades of the public schools from kindergarten to grammar school, so that if, by the aid of good care and medical skill, the pupils are restored to a normal condition of health, they can, without loss of time, go on with their education in the public schools.

The foundation plan of the school is not only to relieve the sufferings and improve the physical conditions of the pupils, but to so train and educate them that, even though permanently crippled, they may become self-supporting. For this reason the work done at the school is entirely different from that done in ordinary schools, and its most important department is that of manual training.

From the kindergarten up the children are taught manual dexterity. The pupils, many of them encased in plaster jackets, some with braces on their limbs, others with their heads supported by jury masts, chatter and laugh and sing about their low tables as they make bright colored crêpe paper candle shades, photograph holders, card racks and many other things.

When the little fingers grow stronger they learn Indian basket weaving, then sloid work, then leather and wood carving, iron and brass work, and when the pupils reach the workshop they are qualified to turn out, and do turn out, work that would attract favorable attention anywhere. In the halls and reception room and crowding every corner of the workshop are carved screens, chairs, tables, footrests, tabourets and boxes, and carved and burned leather designs are piled high on work benches, chairs and tables.

The work in the manual training classes has already demonstrated the fact that even badly and permanently crippled children may become self supporting. Among the lads now in the school some are earning as much as $10 and $12 a week, as a certain percentage on the sale of all articles is paid to each worker.

One boy who has lost both legs is making great progress in wood carving, and another little fellow, scarcely more than a baby in years, earns enough by his work to help his mother and to carry home every month "the price of the rent."

The little girls are allowed to help, when able, at light household work, and are taught millinery, sewing, basket weaving and many kinds of decorative work. The work done in the pleasant sewing room is remarkable, and gives many of the more advanced pupils a little income.

At noon every day the little cripples fall into line and march down to the dining room singing "Marching Through Georgia" at the top of their voices. There they have a warm lunch, with cake and ice cream every Saturday. After luncheon there is a half hour's frolic in the bit of back yard behind the house, then lessons again until 4 o'clock, when the bus drives up and carries them away to their homes.

"And we always hate to see them go," said Mrs. M. E. Bullard, for many of them go back to dark, filthy, unhappy homes, where, in many instances, the work we have done through the day is undone at night by bad food, bad ventilation and unsanitary conditions.

"We provide the children who need them with braces, crutches and artificial limbs, and often when our little ones go from us at night these are taken from them and sold or pawned for drink.

"At our summer home at Claverack they are all our own for three months. Each child has his or her own bed, especially adapted to the suffering little body, and every night they are bathed and their backs and limbs rubbed with alcohol.

"There we can see to their spiritual as well as their physical growth, and with the aid of our corps of physicians can give them the medical care and sanitary oversight which their condition requires. We make them live outdoors, give them all the fresh milk, eggs and butter they can eat, and put them to bed in big airy rooms a little after dark."

The summer home at Claverack, three miles from Hudson, was presented to the school by Mrs. Charles Thorley, in memory of her daughter, Mrs. Lyons, and is called the Lulu Thorley Lyons Home for Crippled and Delicate Children. It is an old mansion, set among green fields and waving trees, with room enough about it for three times as many children to romp.

All study does not cease in the summer vacation. Just enough is required to give zest to rest and play, and for two hours every day school is held under the great oak trees; all the rest of the time is given over to recreation, to swinging in comfortable hammocks, playing about in the fields and woods, or resting tired little backs and twisted limbs on a couch of green grass or new-mown hay, where, lulled by bird songs, fanned by fragrant breezes, these little derelicts are rescued from the wreck of life and brought up to comparative health, peace and self-dependence.

NEW YORK MEN AGE THE FASTER

50 WOMEN CHOOSE HUSBANDS YOUNGER THAN THEMSELVES.

A Man of 60 and a Wife of 60 Look Like Father and Daughter Under the Present Dispensation—A Bride of 50 and a Bridegroom of 30 Is About Right.

While at luncheon the other day three women talking idly of the spring weddings finally concentrated their attention on the question: Should women marry men younger than themselves?

An elderly woman started it. Said she:

"Lillie's fiancé is eight years younger than she is."

The other women didn't even look surprised.

"There seems to be no particular rule observed about age any more," commented one.

"How different from the old days," mused the first speaker. "In the small town where I was brought up if a man got engaged to a woman five or ten years his senior the sewing circle and the church social trembled with excitement, most of the members shaking their heads as much as to say, 'What a mistake; they will never be happy,' and for some reason or other everybody pitied the man.

"Nowadays a man may marry the woman who brought him up, who is old enough to be his mother—it happens sometimes—and no one thinks of getting excited. The only comment is a shower of wedding presents. No one wastes pity on the man."

"That's so," said the third woman.

"In fact there is a good deal more criticism when a young girl marries a man old enough to be her father than when a young man weds a woman old enough to be his mother. I wonder what has caused the change?

"Probably the growing disinclination of women who themselves have no intention of getting old to be hampered with old men. The New York woman's temperament is the cause of the change.

"Not long ago I read in a newspaper of a wife of 21 who in court eloquently warned young women in general never to marry an old man—the old man in her own case being only 40. After dinner, she complained, instead of getting ready to do escort duty her husband settled himself in an easy chair with a newspaper or a book and his pipe.

"The young wife, tiring of that, began accepting the escort of other men, which soon precipitated a row between herself and her husband and a visit to court.

"Now in the town I referred to it was considered a safe, sane, altogether admirable thing for a young girl to marry a man 40 years old. The happiness of both was assured, most people thought, and if during the latter part of his life the wife had to sit up nights nursing her husband and spend her evenings in company with an easy chair and the gout or rheumatism when she secretly longed for the sewing bee, that was just as things should be.

"It was the place of every wife to nurse her husband; that was one reason why middle aged men married young girls, thought the community. So far as I know the same belief still holds in almost every small community. Naturally, in New York it is quite different."

"I don't see why locality has so much to do with it," put in the second speaker.

"Why, to my mind, that is easily explained," rejoined the other. "Take New York, for instance.

"The women here look, act, think and live differently from women in a country village. Their idea of the pleasures of married women is altogether different from that of the country woman, as different as their views on the clothes question.

"In well to do New York circles the time honored theory that woman grows old faster than man is defunct, for the reason that the evidence is against it. In rural dom old age gets in its fine work on men and women pretty equally. The theory referred to can easily be substantiated in any New England town.

"So far as appearances go, it certainly can't be proved in the prosperous circles of New York; and all the world agrees that a woman is no older than she looks, that a man is as young as he feels. The reason man is judged by his feelings, a friend of mine recently pointed out, is that at 60 or thereabouts few men have any looks worth speaking about.

"That may be, of course, because man doesn't know how to bring art to the assistance of nature—but never mind the reason. The fact remains that at 60 the modern man is in looks, if not in feelings, practically a copy of what his forbears of a century back were at his age.

"The modern woman of 60, on the contrary, judged by her looks is practically a youngster in comparison with an old time American woman of 60, and I believe it is this change in woman's appearance which had led to the change in the marriage rules. Not to look old means that one does not care to act old or to be laid on the shelf, and a New York woman of 60 with a husband of like age finds herself handicapped, particularly if she looks young enough to be his daughter, which is apt to be the case.

"To be sure, she is allowed to go as often as she pleases, but alone, to the opera, the theatre, to concerts, to dinners even; for it may as well be admitted that the ordinary society dinner is a bore to most elderly men of the type who are quite willing to shelve every social duty on their wife and daughters, who in turn are generally quite willing to assume them all."

"Quite true," sighed the elderly lady. "My husband is just 62, and it is seldom he will do more than look in on us at the opera or concerts or the theatre or at house entertainments. At the latter he comes in near the close and treats the hostess to some cooked up story about being detained with business friends, and I, of course, never give him away.

"He likes a good dinner as well as any one, but hates having to make himself agreeable to the lady he takes in, unless she happens to be an old friend, and it bores him to chat for three hours about things he isn't interested in. He prefers stag affairs every time, and would rather play cards at the club than in a private drawing room.

"I humor him and save him all I can, and I suppose I have really spoiled him by not insisting that he shall escort me whenever I go out. I go off to the opera night after night in a carriage with a guest or to meet guests invited to sit with us and leave my husband smoking placidly in the library.

"Maybe two hours later he will saunter in and escort me home, maybe he won't come at all. And yet we are called a devoted pair."

"A friend of mine was talking about this very thing the other day," the youngest of the three women remarked, apropos of the fact that her sister, a widow of nearly 40, is engaged to a man of 30.

"'My sister,' she said, 'is about 30 or less in looks and equally young in her feelings, and she has always declared that a woman of lively temperament who doesn't mean to take to caps and wrinkles or to live in a village after she gets to be middle aged must, in order to protect herself against ennui and insure for herself some pleasure at 50, marry a man considerably younger than herself. Naturally a woman who marries at 20 can't do this, and the chances are that unless she gets an opportunity to marry a second time at 60 she will have to get along without an escort to social affairs if she depends on her husband.

"'With women of 30 or 40 it is different. Let them by all means marry men younger than themselves if they get a chance. Things will even up before the fifty year milestone is passed; they will be better matched than with a man of their own age, and the man will be just as well off, too.

"'In fact I never heard of a New York man who was handicapped in his social ambitions because his wife wanted to stay around home and sit with her feet up on a chair by a library table lamp. That sort of thing may happen in a village, but not in New York's prosperous circles.'"

"Yes, it does seem to me that as compared with woman the New York man just galops toward old age," agreed the other women.

"It is certainly true that when a disparity in years exists between a bride and bridegroom it is not always the man who is the older," acknowledged a clergyman. "I find that the tendency is toward an equality of age rather than a disparity. I have fewer cases of May and December mating than when I first entered the ministry, forty years ago, and it happens by no means infrequently that I am asked to marry a woman to a man considerably her junior.

"In one case of recent date the man was 40 and his bride 53, but the woman looked the younger. I know of a case where a man of 30 married a woman of 50, and they are apparently intensely happy.

"No, on the whole, I don't approve of the relative ages of bride and bridegroom being turned around. It is well, I think, for the wife to be the younger, but then, you know, I have old fashioned ideas."

LOST STUDS AND BUTTONS

Left in Shirts Sent to the Laundry—A Valuable Diamond Recovered.

"Plenty of people leave collar buttons and cuff buttons and shirt studs in shirts when they send them to the laundry," said a laundryman. "As a rule these are not of much value; but we do sometimes find fine buttons, and sometimes costly sparklers.

"A customer of ours sent us once in this way, in one of a bundle of shirts sent to the laundry, a $250 diamond, which came pretty near to being finally lost.

"This diamond was set in a shirt stud, and he had used this stud to fasten together the front of a dress shirt through the holes in the shirt bosom at the bottom, out of sight, below the top edge of the low waistcoat. He had wanted an ordinary button to put there, but failing to find one when he was dressing he just picked up this diamond stud. Then he forgot it, and in the next bundle of shirts he sent us he sent along that $250 diamond stud.

"Of course we inspect the shirts as they come in for just such things, looking over the bosoms particularly, but we handle many shirts, and that stud was down in an unusual place, and very likely folded under, out of sight, in the rumpling of the shirt, and it got by. Next morning the owner himself discovered his loss and notified us and of course we promptly began a search for it.

"The shirt supposed to contain the missing diamond, along with the rest of this customer's shirts, and others, had already gone into a washing machine, but we stopped this machine and took everything out of it. The stud was not in any of this customer's shirts, nor was it, washed out of its original place, as it might have been by the softening of the linen in the water and the motion of the machine, to be found anywhere in the folds of any of the other shirts. No diamond. But then—a modern washing machine, you know, is half as big as a hogshead—a man got into the machine, and in the water, on the bottom, he found it.

"So buttons discovered on the first inspection are of course saved, and buttons remaining in the shirts through the washing are likely to be discovered by the starchers; but buttons washed out of the shirts in machines, and of which we have no knowledge, are likely to be drawn off with the water when the machines are emptied, and in that way some may, first and last, be lost."

STORIES OF DR. G. A. PETERS.

ONCE SUCCEEDED IN HUMBUGGING P. T. BARNUM.

A New York Physician of a Dozen Years Ago—Got Back to New York Once by Sheer Assurance—Had a Part in a Famous Duel—Some of His Retorts to Patients.

No physician and surgeon held a warmer place in the hearts of those who knew him than Dr. George A. Peters, who was for forty years prior to his death in 1894 a leader of the profession in New York city. Physician and surgeon both he was, believing that one who undertook to be a family practitioner should be able to minister to any ailment. He had little regard for the specialist.

His early life was a struggle. He did not take up the study of his profession until he had arrived at mature years. One of his earliest attempts to made a living took him abroad. He was not successful and found himself stranded in Liverpool without money or friends. That was in the days of sailing ships and how he obtained his passage home on a first class packet may be told in the words of her captain, who afterward commanded a Cunarder, with whom the doctor always sailed, if he could, on subsequent trips to Europe.

This captain used to tell it about as follows: "The ship was lying in dock at Liverpool and I was very busy in my room when my boy informed me that a young man wished to see me.

"'What does he want?' said I.

"'He says he wants to engage passage to New York, sir.'

"'Tell him to go to the company's office. That is the place to engage passage.'

"'I did tell him that, sir, but he insists upon seeing you personally.'

"'Well,' said I, 'show him down if you can't get rid of him any other way.'

"He came in, a very young looking man with a quick step, apparently not very prosperous, and he put me through a cross-examination about the ship and her accommodations which was thorough and exhaustive and so searching that I have often wondered since that I did not show him the door. As a final question he asked if I carried a cow and expressed himself as much gratified when I answered in the affirmative. He said he couldn't possibly sail on a ship that did not carry a cow.

"That point settled to his satisfaction, he began a general conversation and I was so fascinated by him that before I knew it I had agreed to carry him to New York as a first class passenger and to trust him for his passage money. In thinking since what it was that induced me to do such an unheard of thing I am inclined to believe that it was his superb assurance in insisting upon a cow."

Of Dr. Peters's colloquial sallies for various churches in New York have passed into general usage. The church then presided over by Dr. Bellows at Twentieth street and Fourth avenue he called the "Beefsteak Church," the Reformed Dutch Church at Fifth avenue and Twenty-ninth street "The Church of the Holy Shanghai," from the rooster which serves as a weather vane, and Dr. Houghton's rambling church in Twenty-ninth street the "Church of the Holy Cucumber Vine," which designation it retained until the incident of the actor's funeral changed its nickname to "Little Church Around the Corner."

The doctor used to spend his summers at the Profile House in the White Mountains, and was one of a group which made the early day social life there famous. That group succeeded in humbugging P. T. Barnum. They were sitting on the piazza one afternoon when Dr. Peters proposed a race to a fence about fifty yards away, the last man to touch it to pay for champagne. Barnum saw many men there less ablebodied than he and was willing to come into what seemed to him an easy thing.

The race was run and nobody touched the fence but Barnum. He was cheerful about the champagne, saying it was but just he should take a little of his own medicine once in a while.

There was a high spirited girl at the Profile House one summer who numbered among her many accomplishments an ability to throw fits that would have shamed a Bowery faker. One afternoon there came a hurry call for Dr. Peters and he was hurried into the parlor to find the young woman on the floor, surrounded by sympathizing women, and apparently in the throes of an epileptic convulsion.

Dr. Peters took up her hand, lifted her eyelid with his thumb, turned his back, put his hands in his pockets and walked out, deaf to the remonstrances of the agitated women who were aghast at such an exhibition of hard heartedness by one whom they idolized as the kindest of men. They could get nothing out of him, however, except an assurance that she did not need treatment and would be all right shortly, as the result proved.

Some years afterward a woman, accompanied by her husband, was shown into the doctor's office. She appeared to know him, although he did not at first recall her.

"You don't remember me, doctor. Perhaps you will when I tell you that I am the person who had the fit in the parlor of the Profile House five years ago. I made up my mind then that if I ever had occasion to employ a doctor in New York it should be you. Before we go any further please tell me how you knew there was nothing the matter. I had tried that on many doctors and had never been caught before."

"Why," said Dr. Peters, "when I came into the room I saw that you had picked out the handsomest rug on the floor as a background for your performance. That was suspicious in itself, but when I pulled up your eyelid and saw your bright and wicked eye I knew that you were perfectly well and up to some deviltry of your own which I thought I wouldn't interfere with."

"You were right about the deviltry as soon were about the fit. I had made a bet of a dozen gloves that I could hoodwink you."

Dr. Peters attended in his last illness the father of a woman as notorious for her riches as for her parsimony. As death approached he considered it necessary to make more frequent visits. This visibly annoyed the lady for she knew the doctor's charges were high. He determined to make a last visit there before going home at night.

As he went up the steps a window was thrown open and a voice which he recognized as that of the lady in question called out to him: "You needn't come in, doctor. Father's dead." The charge for one visit was saved.

He accompanied a party to Canada on the occasion of a duel. On their return, no damage having been done, a half hearted attempt was made to indict the principals for leaving the State with intent to fight a duel, and Dr. Peters was summoned as a witness before the Grand Jury. He hadn't been allowed to see the meeting, and was not a very willing witness anyway. This story leaked out of the Grand Jury room. The doctor was under examination as to whether or not he had seen a certain box, the implication being that there was such a box and that it contained a pair of pistols. The examination on this subject was somewhat as follows:

"Now didn't you see a box in the possession of Mr. ——?"

"I believe I did."

"What was it like? Didn't it look like a pistol case? Come, now wasn't there a pair of pistols in it?"

"I'm sure I don't know what was in it. I remember thinking it looked like a flute case. I thought perhaps there was a flute in it."

No indictment was found against anybody. Perhaps it was never seriously intended that there should be.

A certain wealthy man laboring under the delusion that a man's family physician should do anything for him, no matter what his character, called upon him with a proposition that he should perform an impropers operation. The doctor concealed his indignation, and even went so far as to seem to consent and to make an appointment to see the patient. As the man rose to go the doctor said:

"Of course you know that I cannot do a thing of this kind for my ordinary charges. The price will be very high."

"Oh, certainly I know that," was the answer, "and I expect to pay you handsomely for it—very handsomely."

"Well," said the doctor, "it is always wise to arrange such matters beforehand, and I want you to understand that my fee for this operation will be $5,000,000. I cannot afford to do it for less." Which was the end of that.

He was treating a patient who was suffering from too great a devotion to social life and who had succumbed to a prolonged series of big dinners and late sittings at his club. The treatment required a complete change in his habits and what was for him a practical total abstinence. Dr. Peters, while making morning visit, was apparently not too comfortable himself and and said in response to inquiry that he was not feeling well, having been out late at his dining club the night before.

This delighted his patient, who sarcastically advised him to take a dose of his own medicine. After what he considered enough of this the doctor effectually put a stop to it by saying, testily for him: "The difference here is just this. You have asked me for my advice and I have not asked you for yours. Good morning."

He was a Yale man and the second president of the University Club of New York. It was in his last years one of his deepest regrets that he was not likely to live to see that organization settled in its home at Fifty-fourth street and Fifth avenue, in the planning for which he had taken the greatest interest. There Eastman Johnson's portrait of him looks down from the walls of the council room.